

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1382 with a release date of Friday, February 6, 2004 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T. A major problem for Amsat Oscar 40, a surprise BPL rollout in Pennsylvania, UPS says that illegal 10 meter radios will be ordered out of company trucks and another view of the ARRL's restructuring proposal. Find out the details on Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1382 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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#### HAM RADIO IN SPACE: A0-40 SUFFERS CATASTROPHIC POWER FAILURE

The main battery pack on board the AMSAT Oscar 40 satellite has failed and controllers are unsure if the bird can be brought back to life on the reserve power system. Amateur Radio Newsline's Norm Seeley, KI7UP, tells us what happened on-orbit:

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According to AMSAT Executive Vice President Rick Hambly, W2GPS, A0-40 began its tumble to obscurity on Sunday, January 25th. That's when the satellites battery voltage momentarily dropped to 24 point 5 volts. This triggered a fail-safe that shut down the satellites passbands. Then, at the beginning of the eclipse on orbit 1486 the battery voltage rapidly dropped just below the cutoff voltage of 24.0 volts and this shut down the transmitters to protect the battery and other on board equipment.

AMSAT controllers kept a close eye on the bird and on Tuesday the 27th the battery voltage suddenly dropped from to 14V. Mission commanders currently believe that more battery cells short circuited. Control stations immediately began transmitting blind commands to the spacecraft in an attempt to switch over to the auxiliary battery. Eventually, the auxiliary battery pack came on line, but in parallel with the main pack. This means that the shorted main Ni-Cad battery is loading down the back-up Nickel Metal Hydride cells are clamping the voltage low and keeping the auxiliary battery from fully powering the spacecraft.

AMSAT is hopeful that one of the cells in the main battery will eventually fail open circuit. This would effectively remove the damaged battery from service and permit the back up battery to assume the full load of A0-40. In the meantime its a waiting game with fingers crossed that no other catastrophic failures to other parts of the satellite take place.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Norm Seeley, KI7UP, in Scottsdale Arizona.

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A set of spare A0-40 back-up batteries were found at the AMSAT lab in Orlando Florida. Using them Stan Wood, WA4NFY and Lou Mc Fadin, W5DID performed a

series of tests that showed the auxiliary battery pack on board the satellite should work well if they are otherwise undamaged. Unfortunately, that will only happen if the main battery pack can be pulled off line.

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#### HAM RADIO IN SPACE: MIKE FOALE TALKS HOME

Still with ham radio in space, Wednesday, January 28th was a very special day on board the International Space Station for Astronaut Mike Foale. That's because the space traveler got the chance to speak to students at the school he used to attend and he did so using Amateur Radio. Take a listen:

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Contact Audio no print transcript

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The contact between Foale on board the I-S-S and the kids at The King's School, Canterbury, England began at 17:42 UTC when the I-S-S answered the call of G-B-4-F-U-N. That station was operated by G-Zero-A-K-I and the audience kept its breath as Foale answered 12 questions.

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Contact Audio - No print transcript

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Media coverage of this contact was impressive. Meridian TV, BBC TV, BBC Radio Kent, Invicta Radio and the Kent Gazette interviewed the students and put reports in the main newscasts. The BBC World Service and the Press Association asked for information and contact transcripts. (ARISS, ON4WF)

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#### THE BPL FIGHT: PA HAMS ORGANIZE TO FIGHT ALLENTOWN ROLLOUT

Hams in Northampton County in eastern Pennsylvania, just outside of Allentown, are organizing a campaign to protest announced plans by PP&L to offer Broadband Internet Service over power lines in a development in Hanover Township. The Allentown-based utility has been doing field tests of the technology in nearby Emmaus, Pa.

The ARRL's Eastern Pennsylvania Section Manager Eric Olena, WB3FPL says PP&L sent out 2,000 letters to residents in a section of Hanover Township and already has received replies from 200 people interested in subscribing to the service.

Olena says an ARRL District Emergency Coordinator and other hams met with township officials to warn them about the massive interference Broadband over Power Lines brings to the radio spectrum, including fire and emergency frequencies. But, he says, the officials apparently were swayed by the utility's assurances no such interference exists.

An interview with Olena and others involved in the battle, coming in next week's Newsline. (ARNewsline(tm), NT3V)

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ENFORCEMENT: EVEN MORE COOPERATION COMBATTING 10 METER PIRATES FROM UPS

A follow-up to our recent story concerning the use of unlicensed 10 meter radio gear on-board United Parcel Service Trucks. As reported, back on January 7th the FCC notified the U-P-S offices in Elkhart Indiana and Middleburg Heights Ohio of its findings. The company offered its full cooperation to end the problem.

Now comes word from the FCC that they have been contacted by UPS national corporate headquarters has contacted the regulatory agency and the company did not mince any words. It told the FCC that the agency has its full cooperation in removing any unlicensed radio gear and any non-certified two-way gear from their delivery fleet, nation wide.

According to UPS, the only personally owned radio gear permitted in their trucks under a collective bargaining agreement with their union drivers are commercially built unmodified C-B sets, and that only on a regional as-needed basis. No other radios are allowed. (FCC, UPS, others)

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ENFORCEMENT: THE FCC ACTIVE IN A NUMBER OF CASES

Meantime, the FCC has been active in a number of other enforcement issues involving ham radio operators. The agency's Daryl Duckworth, NN0W, has more:

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Duckworth: "An Extra class license was downgraded to Technician class due to a failure to appear for a retest in Solidad California. Also, cancellation of an Extra class license in Medera California for the same reason.

A notice for retesting was sent to a General class licensee in Hialeah Florida. The deadline for that one is March 1st.

A letter requesting additional information pursuant to Section 308(b) of the Communications Act -- in order to make a decision on a General class renewal went out to Newton Square PA..

A letter settling enforcement action with a General class licensee in Bart VT. has resulted in voice operation prohibited for three years on 20 meters.

Daryl Duckworth, NN0W, reporting.

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Even though its still not naming names of alleged violators the FCC is making sure that those thinking about breaking its rules know its still around. (FCC, RAIN)

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Break 1

>From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the WA3PBD repeater serving Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

(5 sec pause here)

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#### RESTRUCTURING: ANOTHER LOOK AT THE ARRL PROPOSAL

Even though there are more than a dozen restructuring proposals before the FCC, its the American Radio Relay Leagues recent filing that really has the world of Amateur Radio talking. The obvious question is why, and thats what we asked correspondant Mark Abramovich, NT3V, to find out:

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As more amateurs find out what the ARRL has to say, they're starting to pay attention.

When the ARRL speaks, the FCC generally listens. In the past, the FCC has used the organization's proposals as a foundation for decisions.

To understand where the ARRL is coming from, you might want to get some perspective from the past. Who better to offer it than Harry Dannals W2HD - elected ARRL president in 1972 and re-elected to five consecutive terms. Now retired and living in Charlottesville, Va., Dannals is on top of the debate.

"It's a long cry from the days of incentive licensing when we did have people who resigned their membership, withdrew their membership, or did not renew their membership, just to show their disappointment and utter dissatisfaction with the incentive licensing proposal as it was named," Dannals recalls. "Because that was indeed (what it was), in the minds of the ARRL board headed at that time by President Herb Hoover.

He believed that in order for us to show that we were improving ourselves and becoming better at what we do that we should upgrade our license structure."

Dannals says the claim the ARRL proposal for a "no code" HF license "dumbs down" the hobby is off the mark.

"I think the new proposal, despite the criticism by those who say: 'I had to do it and therefore, you have to do it,' I think the new proposal will bring more people into amateur radio than the 'no code' proposal ever did," Dannals says.

Dannals says the Novice concept will go a long way in revitalizing interest.

"The introductory grade of license will give them some of the things that will make amateur radio mean more, the long-distance communication, the long friendships that develop over the many thousands of miles," Dannals says. "And I do believe we need this."

Dannals laughs at the fears that we'll need hundreds of FCC types to police the new hams.

"I think if the amateurs themselves who have experience, the older timers - and they don't have to be white-haired and grizzly old-timers - they can be relatively newcomers, maybe 5-10 years," Dannals says. "They can take care of tutoring the newcomers more than adequately."

Dannals says local radio clubs are the key to success for any license restructuring.

"Put out a handshake and say: 'Come on board. We'll help you, we'll teach the courses that you can use to get your license and we'll help you once you've got your license.' The old Elmering still is working."

For the Amateur Radio Newslines, I'm Mark Abramowicz, NT3V, in Philadelphia.

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Keep an ear open for more on this from both Harry Dannals and Mark Abramovich as all of the restructuring petitions wind their way through the FCC rules making process over the next several months. ARNewsline(tm))

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ON RAIN: JIM HASYNIE W5JBP

Meantime an in-depth conversation about this issue with ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, is available from RAIN -- the Radio Amateur Information Network. Its in cyberspace at [www.rainreport.com](http://www.rainreport.com) or on the phone at area code 847-827-7246. (RAIN)

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REGULATORY: CROSS BORDER RADIO DISPUTE BETWEEN US AND MEXICO BROADCASTERS

A cross border radio war may be brewing between the United States and Mexico. This as complaints of massive interference to United States broadcast operations from a new station on 560 kHz in Tecate Tijuana Mexico lead to a high level telephone call between the FCC and the Mexico's SCT on Thursday, January 29th. A call that many hoped will defuse the situation before it escalates any further.

According to the CGC Communicator, the SCT which is Mexico's telecommunications regulator is said to have promised swift action in eliminating the interference that XEKT is currently causing to U.S. stations. But the story does not end here. Concern for Mexico's planned operations as XESS on 780 kHz and XEDD 920 kHz, also in the vicinity of Tijuana continues to mount. A printed copy the authorization for 780 kHz has surfaced. It confirms that operation with 20 kilowatts dayside and 10 kilowatts night with non-directional facilities both times and a quarter-wave tall broadcast tower is in fact sanctioned by the SCT.

The CGC Communicator says that this confirms the power figures it published a few weeks ago and establishes what it terms as more blow torch situations. Meanwhile, additional broadcasters are joining the list of companies concerned with the current 560 kHz interference. (CGC)

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ENFORCEMENT: THE FCC VS. THE SUPERBOWL HALFTIME SHOW

FCC Chairman Michael Powell has ordered an investigation of the telecast of

last weeks Superbowl half-time show in which rock performer Justin Timberlake ripped part Janet Jackson costume on-camera. The stunt brought a massive number of complaints to the regulatory agency from viewers of the game.

In a press release obtained by the Amateur Radio Newsline, Powell states: "I am outraged at what I saw during the halftime show of the Super Bowl. Like millions of Americans, my family and I gathered around the television for a celebration. Instead, that celebration was tainted by a classless, crass and deplorable stunt. Our nation's children, parents and citizens deserve better."

CBS which aired the game denied that the incident was preplanned. None-the-less, Powell instructed the Commission to open an investigation into the broadcast. He also stated that the inquiry will be thorough and swift.

At least in theory, each station that permitted the video to be aired could be fined or have its license designated for as hearing if the investigation finds that the material was either indecent or obscene. (FCC release)

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#### RESCUE RADIO: AGENCY WARNS OF BIG FIRE SEASON IN THE SOUTHWEST

Hams involved in emergency communications in the Western United States should get ready for a rather busy fire season. At least that's what a recently released preliminary outlook for 2004 seems to imply. Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, has the retails:

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According to Jay Miller, W-A-5-W-H-N and Raleigh Stout A-C-5-J-W, the Southwest Area Coordination Center in Albuquerque, issued the report. The center is a multiagency hub for the region's wildfire operations and it says that persistent drought and millions of dead or dying trees have set the stage for a fire season as bad or worse than 2002. That's when millions of acres burned across the region.

In southeastern Arizona and southern New Mexico, field surveys reveal that the snow pack holds less than 20% of the average moisture of a normal mid-winter. Coupled with the 2003 monsoon season being one of the driest in a century, the center says that tinderbox conditions are manifest.

And its going to get worse. With little relief in sight, the fire season, which usually begins in April, could start a month or more earlier. Public land managers are being urged to complete training and preparations sooner than usual and to put more firefighters on duty. It also means that hams involved in support of firefighting efforts will need to hone their skills a lot earlier this year in order to be prepared.

For the Amateur Radio Nerwsline, I'm Bill Passternak, WA6ITF

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Its beginning to look as if firefighters and the ham radio operators who support them may have a tough fire season ahead. (ARNewslin(tm), WA5WHN)

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#### RESCUE RADIO: TEXAS CELLPHONE HERO

A 40-year-old flight attendant in El Paso, Texas is being hailed as a hero. This, for her fast and efficient handling of 15 to 20 9-1-1 calls which were sent to her home phone due to a routing error at S-B-C Communications.

News reports say that Maria Chaidez Karam processed the calls for help - including several emergencies - during the 41-minute glitch. In fact, she relayed details via her own cellular telephone to the police dispatch center's seven-digit non-emergency number.

Complete details about this story are on the web at  
<http://www.borderlandnews.com/stories/borderland/20040119-70359.shtml> (CGC)

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#### RADIO LAW: ABRAMS VS. RPV - ANOTHER WIN

An update on the case of radio site owner Mark Abrams WA6DPB versus the city of Rancho Palos Verdes California. Abrams has been embroiled in litigation against the city for several years and has won every round, This is no different. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled on Thursday, January 15th, that Abrams is entitled to damages, attorneys fees and court costs from the city, but there is a catch. Abrams says that the decision only entitles him to a trial to determine the amount of money involved. It does not set an award amount. (WA6DPB)

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#### BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today's radio amateur. From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at [www.arnewsline.org](http://www.arnewsline.org) and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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#### THE WAR ON TERROR: SECURITY ALERT FOR CELL PHONE GUNS

Don't be surprised if you're asked to make a call on your cellphone the next time you go through airport security. Time Magazine quotes sources as saying handguns disguised as regular cellular telephones have been seized in several drug raids across Europe.

The potentially deadly devices look exactly like a normal cellular handset but are capable of rapidly firing four .22-caliber rounds of ammunition. They are manufactured in Croatia and are fired by punching buttons on the keypad

So far, none of the phony cellphones are known to have surfaced in the United States. Aviation security experts say screening equipment now in use can detect these cellphone guns as well as all other improvised explosive devices..

The rest is on-line at

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1101040202-581402,00.html>

(CGC, Time Magazine )

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#### POSTAL PROBLEMS: CQ INVESTIGATES DAMAGED MAGAZINES

If you are wondering why your ham radio and other magazines have been showing up with torn covers or their insides missing, you are not alone. So were the folks at CQ who were receiving complaints from their readers. So they launched their own probe and what they found that its likely a problem at the United States Postal Service.

According to CQ Publisher Dick Ross, K2MGA, the postal system has installed new equipment that's designed to speed up the processing of mail through automated sorting. Ross says that it usually works quite well but unofficial information coming to him says that the units can cause problems if they are even slightly out of adjustment. As Ross says, it sounds as if the new technology demands maintenance far beyond having a service crew fix it when it breaks.

Ross says that his magazines have already taken steps to get around the problem until the postal service finds a permanent fix. This includes new imported paper for the magazine covers.

What Dick Ross found out about the foibles of the postal services automated sorting system makes good reading. You can find it on page 4 of the February issue of CQ Magazine. (CQ)

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#### NAMES IN THE NEWS: FCC ENGINEER MICHAEL J. MARCUS HONORED BY IEEE

A word of congratulations to Dr. Michael J. Marcus, N3JMM, of the FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology. This, after recently being conferred as a Fellow by the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers based on his extraordinary record of accomplishment.

The IEEE chosen to honor Marcus' contributions in the field of radio technologies with specific recognition to his creative technological vision that significantly advanced policies. This helped to lead to the deployment of spread spectrum and Wi-Fi technologies.

Dr. Marcus joined Office of Engineering and Technology in 1979 and currently serves as its Associate Chief for Technology. He received his bachelor's and doctorate degrees in electrical engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Before joining the FCC, Dr. Marcus worked for Bell Laboratories, the U. S. Air Force, and the Institute for Defense Analyses. (FCC release)

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#### HAMFESTS: AM EXPO 2004 IN NEW JERSEY IN APRIL

Turning to the ham radio social calander, AmExpo, an event within an event will take place on Friday April 30 through Sunday May 2nd 2004 at the Millville Airport located in Millville, New Jersey. In addition to the hamfest, the 2004 "Wheels & Wings" air show is occurring at the Millville Airport at the same. This event features many extraordinary aerobatic exhibitions including the Air Force Thunderbirds. (

Meantime, Hugh McElroy, W2AVN says that AmExpo itself is a celebration of the evolution of communications. Included will be demonstrations of ham radio satellites, Echolink, along with HF, VHF and UHF radio communication in every mode. More information is on-line at [www.p49millville.org](http://www.p49millville.org). (W2AVN)

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#### SEMINARS: COMM ACADEMY IN WASHINGTON IN MARCH

The sixth annual Communications Academy set for March 20th and 21st at the Shoreline Conference Center, in Shoreline, Washington just north of Seattle. This years theme is Interoperability and the Expanding Role of Amateur Radio Communications. The keynote speaker is retired Police Chief Gerald W. Boyd, KW7J. Boyd is the author of five books including three on amateur radio emergency communications. You can find out more in cyberspace at [www.commacademy.org](http://www.commacademy.org) (Press release)

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#### CONFERENCES: EASTERN VHF CONFERENCE IN CT. IN APRIL

And the 30th Annual Eastern VHF/UHF Conference will be held on April 16th to the 18th at the Radisson Hotel in Enfield, Connecticut. Guest speakers to date include Dan Henderson, N1ND, on the status of ARRL VHF/UHF Contesting & Awards, Del Schier, K1UHF, with a talk called What's New at West Mountain Radio and many others. And, as a special thank-you to all those who have supported the conference the planners are providing a free dinner to all who register for the event. More, including registration forms can be found on-line at [www.newsvhf.com](http://www.newsvhf.com) (VHF REflector)

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#### INTERNATIONAL - UK: WORKED ALL BRITAIN AGM ON FEB 15

In international news, the Worked All Britain Awards Group Annual General Meeting will take place on the 15th of February. The venue is the Radiosport Communications and Computer Show at Stevenage in the United Kingdom. Nominations for the committee to consider should be sent to G0NLX at her call book address no later than February 13th. (RSGB)

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#### CONTEST OPERATIONS: K7BV TO TURKS AND CAICOS FOR ARRL DX CW

>From the contest calendar word that Dennis Motschenbacher K7BV will be in the Turks and Caicos Islands from Feb 19th to the 26th. This, to operate in the ARRL DX CW contest using the probable call sign of VP5M. He will use VP5 stroke K7BV outside the contest with operating emphasis placed on the WARC, 6

and 2 meter bands. VHF WSJT meteor scatter scheduled contacts can be arranged. QSL via KU9C. (VHF Reflector)

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DX

In DX, word that five German operators are from Tobago active as 9Y4 slash their home calls through the 14th of February. Look for them around 14.277, 21.377 and 28.377 Mhz. (GB2RS)

And F6AIG is currently on the air from Mayotte. Look for him around 17.00 UTC on about 14.130 Mhz. (GB2RS)

Lastly, DL2GAC is again active as H44MS from Honiara in the Solomon Islands. He plans to stay there a while and is active on 80 through 10 meters on SSB. For all of these operations, please QSL as directed on the air. (GB2RS)

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THAT FINAL ITEM: BROADBAND OVER POWERLINES - AUSTRALIA SHOULD WAIT AND SEE

And finally this week, the pitfalls of broadband over powerlines technology have been highlighted down-under by a group calling itself The Spectrum Issues Group Australia or S-I-G-A. This, in a letter published in the Sydney Morning Herald and The Age news papers. Q-News Graham Kemp, VK4BB has the details.

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While BPL holds out the promise of always-on internet availability from every household power point, overseas experience with this new technology shows Australia should not rush into adopting it.

BPL/PLC systems installed here would cause significant interference to high frequency communications users across Australia which include emergency services, aircraft, police, rural and remote services, maritime, government agencies and private users such as we Radio Amateurs.

Roger Harrison, VK2ZRH, speaking for the group says they are an informal alliance of organisations and individuals across Australia with interests in RF communications and technologies. Alliance members come from broadcasting, community service bodies, consultancies, emergency services, equipment manufacturers and suppliers, government, industry bodies, the radio amateur community and other radiocommunications users.

Graham Kemp, VK4BB.

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The S-I-G-A letter makes fascinating reading no matter where you are in the world. It can be viewed on line at the Fairfax f2 website. That U-R-L is in this weeks printed Amateur Radio Nerwsline report.

(DO NOT READ: <http://smh.com.au/articles/2004/01/19/1074360700131.html>)

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB and Australia's Q-News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is [newsline@arnewsline.org](mailto:newsline@arnewsline.org). More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at [www.arnewsline.org](http://www.arnewsline.org). You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), P.O. Box 660937, Arcadia, California 91066.

A reminder that the newly created Roy Neal, K6DUE, Amateur Radio Mentoring Project is up and operating. We already have signed up over two dozen hams who are willing to assist others. If you can help, or if you need assistance please drop a note with your name, address, hone number and area of expertise to [mentor@arnewsline.org](mailto:mentor@arnewsline.org) and we will get back to you as fast as we can.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I'm Jim Davis, W2JKD, 73 and saying thank you for listening." Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) is Copyright 2004. All rights reserved.